

Teacher's What are Primary and Secondary Sources?

Read aloud the following excerpt, more than once if needed to help full comprehension. Optionally, review the citation for the excerpt to review/introduce how an online source is cited.

"Primary sources are the raw materials of history—original documents and objects which were created at the time under study. They are different from secondary sources, accounts or interpretations of events created by someone without firsthand experience."

Library of Congress, Using Primary Sources. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/> (accessed 9/4/2012).

Examples of PRIMARY Sources:

Students should name original documents, creative work, or artifacts, all of which were created by those who lived during and experienced the time that is under study. Primary sources provide inside views of a particular event, person(s), and/or environment. Some examples that students might mention are:

- *Diary of Anne Frank*
- *The Liberty Bell in Philadelphia*
- *United States Declaration of Independence*
- *Michelangelo's David statue, as well as his writings and drawings*
- *Beethoven's Symphony No. 5*
- *Students' own photos, poems 'text messages,' and other items that they create originally*

Examples of SECONDARY Sources:

Students should provide examples of items that represent analyses and interpretations of events. Students might also demonstrate their understanding that some secondary sources include various types of primary sources. For example, an exhibition that shows how the Statue of Liberty was built might include pieces of materials used during the construction, personal items of those who worked on the statue, popular music of the time, etc. Some examples that they might name are:

- *a contemporary magazine article*
- *an exhibition about George Washington*
- *a book about the changing role of women in the US during and after World War II*
- *a history textbook*
- *a student's essay on the activism of Sojourner Truth*